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ABSTRACT

During the hours progressively spent by elementary school students through sixth grade, their contact with teachers is intense. The influence of the teacher upon a student's life is perhaps greater at this time than at later ages when the peer group replaces adults as a significant factor at school. Thus, the amount of time spent in the elementary school, the age of the students, and the influence of the teacher upon the student make the student's view of the elementary school experience a very important factor to study and understand more fully. This paper reports selected data which examines several elementary school classrooms in order to "see" them as those students, teachers and observers reported their perceptions through the research instruments from a Study of Schooling (Goodland, and others). Much of the data reflect the experiential curriculum--what the student perceives he or she is experiencing and learning in a particular classroom. Such data are augmented by that taken from the questionnaires administered to the teachers and by data collected by research observers in those classrooms. (Author/GK)

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TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS AS PERCEIVED BY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS: AN ASPECT OF THE EXPERIENTIAL CURRICULUM

by

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Teacher Effectiveness as Perceived by Elementary School Students: An Aspect of the Experiential Curriculum

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Elementary school students spend approximately 8,000 hours in school as they progress from kindergarten through the sixth grade. During those hours, they have contact with a limited number of teachers, perhaps as few as 7, so that the contact with each one is relatively prolonged and intense. Also, the students enter school at the rather formative age of 5 and continue under the direct influence of a few adults in the elementary school until their pre-adolescence years. The influence of the teacher upon a student's life is perhaps greater at this age than at later ages when the peer group replaces adults as a significant factor at school. Thus, the amount of time spent in the elementary school, the age of the students, and the influence of the teacher upon the student make the student's view of the elementary school experience a very important factor to study and understand more fully.

This paper reports selected data which examines several elementary school classrooms in order to "see" them as those students, teachers and observers reported their perceptions through the research instruments from a Study of Schooling.[1] Much of the data reflect the experiential curriculum--what the student perceives he or she is experiencing and learning in a particular classroom.[2] Data from the experiential curriculum are augmented by data taken from the questionnaires administered to the teachers and by data collected by research observers in those classrooms.

Design of the Study

Student data from the elementary school classrooms were examined using 3 criteria to identify teachers who were perceived as being particularly high or low on variables relating to classroom practices and interaction. First, it was decided that variables reflecting student reactions to the teacher, perhaps a more clearly perceived relationship, should be used rather than reactions to the questions about the content areas of the curriculum. The teacher is a very significant variable in how the curriculum of the various content areas get implemented, but it may be compounded by student likes, dislikes, abilities and levels. Thus, student reaction to the teacher was considered basic to this study for identifying teachers perceived as effective or ineffective. Second, it was decided to include as items for discriminating among the elementary teachers three classroom climate scales: teacher concern, peer esteem and teacher punitiveness. These 3 scales had been subjected to many statistical analyses and had proved to be discrete scales which described aspects of the classroom as reported by the students.[3] A third criterion for selecting other variables for identifying the 2 groups of teachers to use items which had been written clearly so that it was fairly certain how students had interpreted the statement.

Originally, 57 items or scales which met the 3 criteria above were considered for possible use in identifying those teachers whose students reported on their questionnaires that their teachers were among the highest or among the lowest on those items. As the 57 items were examined more closely,

however, it was noted that many of the items were closely correlated to each other in other statistical analyses done on the elementary school data. Because of this, it finally was decided to use only 3 variables to identify the teachers to whom elementary school students responded in a particularly positive or negative way: teacher concern, clarity of directions for learning and opportunities for students to have choices and make some decisions in the classroom. Each elementary classroom summary of student responses for these items was recorded and those classrooms which appeared at the lowest and highest ends of the scale were selected for this study. Based on student response to the 3 variables, 12 effective and 12 ineffective early elementary teachers (grades 1-3) and 11 effective and 11 ineffective upper elementary (grades 4-6) teachers were identified. The specific scale and items used for identifying the early elementary teachers are shown in Table I and the specific scale and items for the upper elementary teachers are shown in Table II.

There appeared to be no discernible pattern among the types of schools from which the sample of teachers was taken. Urban and rural schools, predominantly white and minority schools, large and small schools were included in this sample as they were in the entire study. In addition, classrooms from the same school appeared on the list of teachers with high scores and teachers with low scores. Thus, the sample used for this study did not reflect any particular trend in the composition of the schools as reflected in the total study.

Table I

Variables Used to Select Effective Teachers

and Ineffective Teachers as Perceived by Early Elementary Students

Teacher Concern Scale

My teacher is friendly.
I like my teacher.

Teacher Clarity

I understand what my teacher wants me to do.
I get mixed up about what my teacher wants me to do.

Student Decision Making

I choose what I want to do in this class.

Table II

Variables Used to Select Effective Teachers

and Ineffective Teachers as Perceived by Upper Elementary Students

Teacher Concern Scale

My teacher listens to me.
My teacher makes this class fun for me.
My teacher is friendly.
I like the teacher in this class.
I wish I had a different teacher for this class (-).

Teacher Clarity

Our teacher gives clear directions.

Student Decision Making

We can choose what we want to learn in this class.
I would like more chances to help choose what we do in this class.
Students help decide what we do in this class.

Items from the early elementary student, upper elementary student, elementary teacher questionnaires, and the observation schedules were identified as potential factors which might correlate with the view of teachers held by the students as defined by the 3 selection scales and items. Early elementary students and upper elementary students were kept separate because their questionnaires were different in some respects. Variables were selected which would describe the curriculum, teaching practices and interaction patterns of the classroom and school. These included perceptions of attitudes toward and opinions about those dimensions. The relationship between the effective or ineffective teachers as perceived by the elementary students and these items was determined. Only those items which discriminated between the high and low teachers, or the effective and ineffective teachers at the .05, .01 or .001 level of significance are included in this report. These data are summarized in Tables 3 through 8.

At the early elementary level, responses from the students correlated with the effective or ineffective teachers around 6 clusters of items: opinions about curriculum areas, attitudes toward school and school work in general (not subject specific), classroom decision making, perceptions of other students, perceptions of the teacher and the age and grade level (demographic variables) of the students. Students in grades 1-3 who perceived their teachers as being effective reported that math was just right and a significantly larger percentage of them reported they liked reading than did the students at this level who perceived their teachers as being ineffective. They also

reported liking school and schoolwork in general better than did students with ineffective teachers. Although students with effective teachers reported that they could choose more often what they did in their class, they also reported they complied with their teachers' work assignments more often. Since these were 2 separate items, it is not clear whether students were reporting a comfortable balance between doing what they wanted to do sometimes and complying with teacher requests sometimes. More students at the upper levels of the grade range (1-3) and age range (approximately 6 to 8 years of age) were in the sample with ineffective teachers. Perhaps as students live in school longer, they become more discriminating about the effectiveness of their teachers.

More early elementary students who perceive their teachers as being effective reported classroom cooperation with each other; that is they helped each other in the class. Their perceptions of their teachers also were more positive in the sense of helping them learn better and in being friendlier. More of them reported their teachers acted the same toward all kids, that their teachers listened to them, were friendly and that they liked their teachers. At the same time, more of them perceived their teachers as helping them do their work right if they had done it wrong and as providing them with enough time to do their work in their classes. Not only, then, were the effective teachers perceived as friends to students, they also had some characteristics as good instructors. It is interesting to note from Table III that those variables which

Table III

Student Variables Differentiating Effective and Ineffective Teachers as Perceived by Early Elementary Students

Variable		Effective Mean or Percentage of Students	Ineffective Mean or Percentage of Students
Opinions About Curricular Areas			
Is math easy, just right or hard?	**	1.56	1.81
Do you like reading?	*	91.05%	81.23%
Attitudes Toward School and School Work in General			
I like to do school work.	**	2.49	2.17
I like school.	***	2.60	2.27
Classroom Decision Making			
I choose what I want to do in this class.	***	1.98	1.59
I always do what my teacher tells me to do.	**	2.85	2.68
Perceptions of Other Students			
The kids in this class help each other.	***	2.37	2.14
Perceptions of the Teacher			
My teacher acts the same toward all kids.	**	2.37	2.03
If I do my work wrong, my teacher helps me do it right.	*	2.34	2.02
I have enough time to do my work in this class.	**	2.54	2.89
My teacher listens to me.	***	2.61	2.29
Teacher Concern Scale	***	2.78	2.44
My teacher is friendly.			
I like my teacher.			

Table III (con't.)

Early Elementary Student Demographic Variables

		Effective Mean	Ineffective Mean
Grade Level	**	1.08	2.12
Age Level	***	6.42	7.44

* Significant at the .05 level
** Significant at the .01 level
*** Significant at the .001 level

Table IV

Observation Variable Differentiating Effective and Ineffective Early Elementary Teachers

		Effective Mean	Ineffective Mean
Questioning by the Teacher	**	1.81	.93

** Significant at the .01 level

proved to be most statistically significant (at the .001 level) were all variables of affect, not those dealing with the cognitive areas of learning.

The only variable from the observation data which differentiated effective early elementary teachers from ineffective ones was the amount of questioning by the teacher. Within five minute time frames, observers noted effective teachers asking more questions of students than did the ineffective teachers (Table IV).

The early elementary effective teachers were differentiated from ineffective ones on 5 different clusters of items from the teacher questionnaire: their perceptions of curriculum areas, the control they have over curricular elements, bases used for individualizing instruction, attitudes toward behavioral objectives and use of professional resources. These data are summarized in Table V. Ways in which teachers perceive practices in one curriculum area, reading/language arts/English, accounted for all but one item in distinguishing between effective and ineffective teachers at this level in the first cluster of variables.

The ineffective teachers reported higher percentages of their students had appropriate materials and content in this curricular area according to the ethnic or cultural background of students. Apparently then, the effective teachers perceived more problems with the content and materials being appropriate to the ethnic or cultural backgrounds of their students. More effective early elementary teachers reported they found it useful to have their students make up their own stories, plays or poems and more often had their students build or draw

things and act things out in their reading/language arts/ English classes than did the ineffective ones. Only one other curricular area had a statistically significant relationship, social studies. More effective teachers taught social studies in conjunction with other subjects than as a single subject. In this sample of teachers, then, the effective teachers reported less of a match between the ethnic and cultural backgrounds of their students with reading/language arts/English content and materials, more creative activities in these classes and an attempt to integrate social studies with other curricular areas. More of the effective early elementary teachers reported they had greater control over setting goals and objectives in their planning and teaching than ineffective teachers. More of the effective teachers also reported they used different time schedules for different students, different grouping arrangements, different activities and different content in order to individualize their instruction. More effective teachers reported higher agreement that behavioral objectives assisted them in evaluating student progress than did the ineffective teachers. The effective early elementary teachers, then, tried to individualize instruction on more curricular elements, believed they had a lot of control over setting their goals and objectives and that behavioral objectives were useful in helping to evaluate student progress.

More effective early elementary teachers had consulted district personnel during the last year, but reported less professional contact with district committees than did the ineffective ones.

The effective teachers in the early elementary sample seem to have greater instructional skill and control over curricular elements than did the ineffective ones. They used more creative activities in reading and language arts for their students. While they consulted distict personnel more frequently during the past year, they had less contact with district committees.

Items from upper elementary school students which significantly correlated with the effective or ineffective teachers clustered in 5 major areas: opinions about curricular areas, classroom decision making, perceptions of other students and opinions, attitudes toward school and schoolwork in general and perceptions of the teacher (See Table VI). As with the early elementary students, the curriculum area of reading/language arts/English was the one which most often correlated significantly with the 2 groups of teachers. Students of the effective teachers reported they used films, filmstrips and slides, games and tape records or records more often. More of them also usually liked to use games in their reading/language arts/English classes. More liked to remember facts, dates, words, names or rules, a low level recall activity. The higher cognitive activities listed for students did not correlate significantly with the sample of teachers in this study. Other activities which students with effective teachers reported they liked were listening to the teacher having class discussions and acting things out. Not only did they report liking these activities, more of them also reported they actually did these activities in their classes. They reported that they

Table V

Teacher Variables Differentiating Between
Effective and Ineffective Early Elementary Teachers

Item		Effective Mean or Percentage of Students	Ineffective Mean or Percentage of Students
Curricular Areas			
Reading or Language Arts			
For approximately what percentage of students in this class are the materials and content in this subject appropriate, according to the ethnic or cultural background of the students (0% or almost none, about 25%, about 50%, about 75%, 100% or almost all)?	*	3.42	4.45
How useful do you think it is to have students make up their own stories, plays or poems?	*	3.83	3.36
How often do students in this class act things out?	**	2.42	2.00
How often do students in this class build or draw things?	***	3.42	2.64
Social Studies			
Do you teach social studies primarily in conjunction with other subjects or as a single subject?	*	57.1%	42.9%
Perceived Control Over Curricular Elements			
How much control do you feel you have over decisions about setting goals and objectives in your planning and teaching?	*	4.42	3.83
Bases for Individualizing Instruction			
Use of different time schedules for different students	*	3.67	2.64
Use of different group arrangements	*	4.18	3.36
Use of different activities	*	3.73	3.18
Use of different content	*	3.64	3.00

Table V (con't.)

Item		Effective Mean	Ineffective Mean
Attitudes Toward Behavioral Objectives			
Behaviorally stated instructional objectives assist me in evaluating student progress	**	3.75	3.08
Use of Professional Resources			
Indicate whether or not you have consulted district personnel during the last year.	**	1.75	1.25
Indicate how often you have contact with district committees.	*	1.25	1.67

* Significant at the .05 level
** Significant at the .01 level
*** Significant at the .001 level

built or drew things, wrote answers to questions and read for fun more often, although their liking for these latter 3 activities did not correlate significantly. Finally, more students of effective teachers reported that this curricular area was more interesting to them. In this same curricular area, however, more students of ineffective teachers reported that they never had the opportunity to choose their learning materials for these classes.

In the social studies, more students of the effective teachers reported that they considered social studies as very important and that it was more interesting for them than did the students of ineffective teachers. More students of the effective teachers also reported they found science more interesting.

The sample of effective teachers seemed to be able to make 3 curriculum areas more interesting to the students, reading/language arts/English, social studies and science. Their students also liked the more traditional activities of listening to the teacher and discussing topics better as well as the more overt and creative activity of acting things out. Their teachers provided them more opportunities for students to select their own learning materials in reading/language arts/English classes.

More students of the effective teachers reported a greater degree of involvement in classroom decision making (not subject specific) and more freedom. By contrast, more students of the ineffective teachers reported they had less freedom, less opportunities to decide what they did and that they would like more chances to help choose what they did in class.

Table VI

Student Variables Differentiating
Effective and Ineffective Teachers as Perceived By
Upper Elementary Students

Opinions About Curricular Areas		Effective Means or Percentage of students	Ineffective Means or Percentage of students
Reading/Language Arts/English			
Do you usually like to use games in this class?	*	94.15	84.10
Do you use in this class:			
films, filmstrips or slides?	*	86.88	64.57
games?	*	74.79	50.31
tape recordings or records?	*	70.08	48.56
Do you usually like to remember facts, dates, words, names or rules?	**	67.11	49.94
Do you usually like to ---listen to the teacher when he/she talks or shows how to do something?	**	88.35	70.55
have class discussions?	**	70.86	55.07
act things out?	**	74.63	62.61
Do you in this class---			
listen to the teacher when he/she talks or shows how to do something?	*	96.68	89.32
have class discussions?	*	82.03	64.81
build or draw things?	**	79.89	57.14
write answers to questions?	*	92.57	84.23
act things out?	*	57.97	37.52
read for fun?	**	85.18	71.60
How often can you choose your own reading, language arts, or English books and materials in this class?			
Never	**	27.59	47.81
Never	**	1.80	1.60
How interesting or boring for you is---reading/language arts/English?	*	3.20	2.82
Social Studies			
In general, how important is social studies?	*	3.55	3.30
How interesting or boring for you is---social studies?	*	3.04	2.89
Science			
How interesting or boring for you is---science	*	3.89	3.09

Table VI (Con't.)

		Effective Means or Percentage of Students	Ineffective Means or Percentage of Students
Decision Making			
I would like more chances to help choose what we do in this class.	*	1.63	1.75
We can choose what we want to learn in this class.	*	1.25	1.09
We don't feel like we have any freedom in this class	***	1.17	1.58
Students help decide what we do in this class.	***	1.61	1.34
Perceptions of Other Students			
Students in this class yell at each other.	***	1.43	1.69
Students don't care about what goes on in this class.	***	1.31	1.54
Many students don't know what they're supposed to be doing during class.	***	1.47	1.68
Peer Esteem Scale	***	1.85	1.73
Students in this class are unfriendly to me.			
I like working with other students in this class.			
I like my classmates.			
In this class, people care about me.			
My classmates like me.			
Opinions and Attitudes Toward School and Schoolwork in General			
There are places in this school where I don't go because I'm afraid of other students.	**	56.58	75.73
There are not enough materials for everyone in this class to use.	**	1.26	1.47
If you had to choose the one most important thing for you for the school to teach, which of the following would it be?			
To get a good job	*	16.15	27.77
To become a better person	*	22.90	14.32
Which one of the following does the school think is the most important thing for students?			
To get a good job	*	9.47	17.51

Table VI (Con't.)

		Effective Means or Percentage of Students	Ineffective Means or Percentage of Students
What grade would you give this school?	**	4.23	3.58
I feel good about what happens in this class.	***	1.84	1.50
I like the way this classroom looks.	***	1.92	1.62
Perceptions of the Teacher			
Teacher Punitive Scale My teacher hurts my feelings. I'm afraid of my teacher. My teacher gets mad when I ask a question. My teacher makes fun of me. My teacher punishes me unfairly.	***	1.10	1.29
Teacher Concern Scale My teacher listens to me. My teacher makes the class fun for me. My teacher is friendly. I like the teacher in this class. I wish I had a different teacher for this class.	***	1.91	1.55
In this class how much time is usually taken by ----			
Getting students to behave	***	1.87	2.23
Daily routines	*	1.69	1.53
The grades or marks I get in this class are fair.	***	1.88	1.73
We have to learn things without knowing why.	***	1.29	1.48
If I do my work wrong my Teacher tells me how to do it right.	***	1.91	1.70
Our teacher tells us ahead of time what we are going to be learning about.	***	1.75	1.61
I do all the work my teacher gives me.	**	1.87	1.76
I do not have enough time to do my work for this class.	***	1.23	1.43
I forget things I've been taught in this class because I don't practice them enough.	*	1.31	1.41
Our teacher never changes his/her mind about anything.	*	1.35	1.49

Table VI (Con't.)

	Effective Means or Percentage of Students	Ineffective Means or Percentage of Students
Our teacher gives clear directions.	*** 1.88	1.63
The teacher likes some students in this class better than others.	*** 1.40	1.69
Our teacher has fun teaching this class.	*** 1.91	1.53
Our teacher treats us like babies.	*** 1.09	1.38
Many teachers at this school don't care about students.	**46.95%	70.30%

* Significant at the .05 level
** Significant at the .01 level
*** Significant at the .001 level

Table VII

Observation Variable Differentiating
Effective and Ineffective Upper Elementary Teachers

	Effective Mean	Ineffective Mean
Student nontask behavior or Teacher social interaction with students.	* 7.84	3.02

* Significant at the .05 level

Students of the effective upper elementary teachers had more positive perceptions of other students in their classes as measured by the Peer Esteem Scale. This scale has items dealing with how friendly other students are, whether their students like their classmates, whether their classmates liked them, whether people cared about them and whether they liked working with other students in the class. Three single items in this cluster also differentiated between the 2 groups of teachers. More students of ineffective teachers reported that students yelled at each other and didn't care what went on in the class. Classroom dissonance seems to be a characteristic of the classrooms of the ineffective teachers in this sample, while the effective teachers has classrooms which were perceived by students as pleasant, comfortable places with caring and friendly people.

The fourth cluster of variables was opinions and attitudes toward school and schoolwork in general. More students of the effective teachers graded their schools higher, a grade of B, than did students of the ineffective teachers, a grade of C+. When asked what the 1 most important thing the school had to teach them as individual students, more students of the ineffective teachers responded, to get a good job, while more students of the effective teachers responded, to become a better person. Students of the ineffective teachers reported that their school also believed the most important thing the school had to teach them was to get a good job. The perceptions of the emphasis of the school on the utilization function of schooling were congruent with their personal beliefs for students of the ineffective teachers.

More students of the ineffective teachers said there were places in the school where they would not go because they were afraid of other students. They also reported there were not enough materials for the students in their classes. By contrast, more students of the effective teachers reported they felt good about what happens in their classes and that they liked the way their classroom looked.

Effective upper elementary teachers in this sample seemed to make their classrooms safe and attractive both physically and psychologically. This is reflected directly in many of the items as well as in more of the students responding that they thought the 1 most important thing the school should teach them was to be a good person. It should be noted here that the most important thing the school had to teach the students was intellectual processes was the most frequently reported function of school by all elementary students in the total sample of the Study of Schooling. This function, however, did not differentiate between this sample of effective and ineffective teachers.

The final cluster of upper elementary student variables differentiating between the 2 samples was perceptions of the teacher. Two scales, teacher punitive and teacher concern, are in this cluster as well as some single items. Students of the ineffective group reported their teachers were more punitive than did the effective ones. (See Table VI for the individual items compiling this scale.) On the other hand, students of the effective teachers reported their teachers were more concerned (See Table VI for the individual items of this scale). Also, students of the ineffective teachers said more of their time

in class was spent in getting students to behave while students of the effective teachers reported more time was spent on daily routines. Apparently, the effective teachers spent more time on getting the classroom organized and tending to routine chores than the ineffective ones did. Perhaps these activities contributed to the classroom being a more comfortable, predictable place to be in daily.

Students of the ineffective teachers reported that they more often had to learn things without knowing why, that they did not have enough time to do their work, that they forget things they have been taught because they did not practice them enough, that their teacher never changed his/her mind about anything, that their teacher liked some students better than others and that their teacher treated them like babies. Also, more students of the ineffective teachers reported that many teachers at their school did not care about students. By contrast, more students of the effective teachers reported that the grades they received were fair, that their teacher would help them if they did their work wrong, that their teacher told them ahead of time what they would be learning about, that they did all the work their teacher gave them, that their teacher gave clear directions and had fun teaching the class. Through student perceptions, then, the ineffective teachers were not clear about instructional purposes, did not provide enough time or practice for learning tasks, were inflexible, demeaning and had favorites among the students. Effective teachers on the other hand, were fair in the grades they gave, helpful in the learning process, clear about what was to be studied, enjoyed

teaching and had students who did the work given them. It should not be difficult to select which of these 2 samples a student might choose to spend 180 schools a year with!

Once again, it must be noted that many of the variables which are most statistically significant (.001 level) are affective and interpersonal variables. Students in this sample clearly suggest the importance of these areas to life in elementary school classrooms. Several highly significant variables also attest to the importance of the instructional skill of the teacher. Both areas seem to be significantly related to how students perceive the experiential curriculum.

For the upper elementary sample as with the early elementary one, only one observation variable was statistically significant in its relationship to this sample of teachers, student non-task behavior or teacher social interaction with students. The observers noted that the effective teachers. Perhaps the time socializing with their students helped make the classroom a friendlier place for students to be.

The final group of variables which differentiated between effective and ineffective teachers were selected items from the teacher questionnaire. They clustered into 8 topics: curriculum areas, perceived usefulness of what students learned (not subject specific) in their classes, amount of control over curricular elements, satisfaction with curricular elements, bases for individualizing instruction, grades given to their school, perceived problems of their school, and use of professional resources.

The only curriculum area which had items distinguishing

between the 2 groups of teachers was reading/language arts/English. Effective teachers reported having students listen when they were talking or demonstarting how to do something was useful more often than did the ineffective. This might be a factor in obtaining and keeping students' attention during the learning process. Teachers who believe that what they are saying is important to students are more likely to insist that students be quiet and listen than are teachers who are less effective in directing the learning process. They reported using games and simulations more often. They perceived the materials and content used to be approximate for both the interests of their students and for the ability level of students for a higher percentage of time. Ineffective teachers, however, reported that teachers' unions had a greater influence in what they taught in this area than the effective teachers did.

Effective teachers reported that they believed what their students were learning in general was more relevant for what they need to know now and for later in their lives. Thus, the content being taught was perceived as relevant on one dimension as well as the materials used in at least the most significant curriculum area, reading and language arts.

Effective teachers reported having more control in their planning and teaching in grouping students for instruction. They expressed greater satisfaction with their selection of learning activities, teaching techniques and scheduling of time use. They more often considered student preferences as one type of information they used when individualizing instruction.

Effective upper elementary teachers, then, seem to have

Table VIII

Teacher Variables Differentiating Effective and Ineffective Upper Elementary Teachers

		Effective Mean	Ineffective Mean
Curriculum Areas			
Reading/Language Arts/English			
How useful do you think each one is or would be for students learning in this subject? Listen to me when I talk or demonstrate how to do something	*	3.89	3.44
How often is each thing used in this class?			
Games or simulations	**	2.78	1.89
Learning kits	*	2.67	1.78
For approximately what percentage of students in this class are the materials and content in this subject appropriate, according to each of the following criteria?			
Interests of the students	*	4.11	2.89
Ability level of students	*	4.44	3.56
How much influence does each of the following have on what you teach in this subject?			
Teachers' Unions	*	1.0	1.56
Usefulness of What Students Learn			
What students are learning in this school will be useful for what they need to know NOW.	*	3.50	3.10
What students are learning in this school will be useful for what they need to know LATER in life.	*	3.35	3.00
Perceived Control Over Curricular Elements			
How much control do you feel you have over decisions about each of the following areas of your planning and teaching?			
Grouping students for instruction	*	4.64	4.00

Table VIII (con't.)

	Effective Mean	Ineffective Mean
Satisfaction With Curricular Elements		
How satisfied are you with each of the following areas of your planning and teaching?		
Selecting learning activities	* 3.55	2.89
Selecting teaching techniques	* 3.64	2.88
Scheduling time use	* 3.73	2.67
Bases For Individualizing Instruction		
How frequently do you utilize each of the following types of information about students if and when you individualize instruction?		
Student preferences	* 2.82	2.11
Grade Given to School		
Students are often given the grades ABCD and fail to describe the quality of their work. If schools could be graded in the same way, what grade would you give this school?	* 4.27	3.33
Perceived Problems at the School		
For each one, indicate the extent to which you think it is a problem at this school.		
Student misbehavior	* 2.00	2.60
Use of Professional Resources		
Indicate whether you consulted with district personnel during the last year.	* 1.67	1.20
How much do educational organizations affect your working conditions?	* 1.70	2.70

more skill than the ineffective ones in some essential professional skills and to be more satisfied with how they used some of the major curricular elements, those most basic to life in the classroom everyday. It may be possible that they know better and consider their students more often when making some instructional decisions.

Effective teachers graded their school higher (B) than did the ineffective ones (C). Ineffective teachers, however, perceived student misbehavior as a more serious problem than the effective ones, although they perceived it as a minor, not a major one. Perhaps the greater lack of professional skills of the ineffective teachers contributed to the minor problems they had with student misbehavior.

Finally, more of the effective teachers had consulted with district personnel during the last year and the ineffective teachers indicated that educational organizations had a greater impact on their working conditions.

Summary and Implications

The curriculum area of reading/language arts/English figured prominently in the eyes of students in differentiating between effective and ineffective teachers. At the early elementary level, the use of more non-traditional types of activities and materials such as audio visual materials and the more creative activities are significant for the effective teachers. A number of the traditional activities as well differentiated among the upper elementary sample. A member of the effective teachers reported that materials and content, however

were appropriate for fewer of their students according to the ethnic or cultural backgrounds of their students, but at the upper level, the materials and content were appropriate for more of their students according to their ability and interests. This curriculum area as well as social studies and science were more interesting to the upper elementary students.

It is interesting that only 1 of the major curriculum areas investigated consistently discriminated between the 2 groups of teachers. This raises some interesting questions which ought to be pursued. Is the curriculum so imbalanced that reading/language arts/ English is essentially the curriculum for the elementary school? Or are the other curriculum areas included, but taught so similarly, that elementary students cannot differentiate effectively among them? Or are the other curriculum areas taught so infrequently that students clearly get the message that what really matters in the elementary school curriculum is reading/language arts/English? Educators who believe that a balanced curriculum is necessary to help students learn to cope with their rapidly changing world, learn to relate to and accept a wide diversity of people and beliefs and to be accepting and understanding of one's own capabilities and limitations will find the answers to the above questions intriguing; perhaps very unsettling.

Professional skills also differentiated between the effective and ineffective teachers. Students of effective teachers perceived their teachers as giving clear directions, helping them do their work correctly, providing adequate time

and practice, having work at an appropriate level, grading fairly, and choosing what they do in class sometimes for themselves. These students also reported that they complied with their teachers' expectations for them to do their work. Effective early elementary teachers were perceived by observers as engaging more often in questioning strategies. They had consulted district personnel during the past year, but had less contact with district committees. They reported they believed they had considerable control over setting goals and objectives and satisfaction with some of the curricular elements in their planning and teaching; activities, teaching techniques and time. They reported that they tried to individualize instruction using several curricular elements: time, grouping, activities and content. Upper elementary teachers also reported consideration of student preferences more often to individualize instruction. They perceived their school more favorably; they graded their school higher, a B, than did the ineffective teachers.

The professional skills which significantly differentiated between the 2 groups of teachers, however, reflect only one approach to teaching, the direct teaching model. Without question, this model was reflected because most of the questionnaire items were written from this perspective. A few were not, however, and the observation schedule used contained aspects of other approaches, but they were not statistically significant in this study.

While the direct teaching model is essential for many types of learning which elementary school students are expected

to achieve, it clearly has limitations and cannot help students achieve other important learnings as effectively as other models of teaching.[4] Learning how to learn, acceptance of others who look or believe differently than oneself, tolerance of ambiguity, interpersonal skills and knowing oneself would be accomplished best by using other approaches to teaching. These are examples of goals which some educators believe are essential for students who are going to live much of their lives in the 21st century. If these goals are accepted as important ones, teachers must have the necessary skills in other teaching models to help students achieve them. Using only 1 teaching approach will not be effective in helping students attain such an array of goals.

A general attitude of liking school and school work also separated the 2 groups of teachers. Students of effective teachers reported that they liked school and their work. This attitude also was reflected in the way they perceived their peers and teachers. They believed the students cooperated with each other; they liked the way their classroom looked. The effective teachers were perceived as being more concerned, friendlier, more enthusiastic and less punitive than the ineffective teachers. Observers noted that effective teachers spent more time on social interaction and student nontask behavior. Classrooms of the effective teachers appeared to be friendly, comfortable places where classroom routines were attended to. Apparently these teachers are perceived as interested in students as people as well as students to be taught.

It is significant that most of the variables which had the greatest statistical significant (.001 level) were those which had to do with affective and interpersonal variables. From the view of this sample of students, it is essential that teachers not only have professional skills in curriculum and instruction, but be able to relate to the students in a friendly, interested, comfortable, caring way. They also must be able to conduct life in the classroom in an organized way which makes the student enjoy being there.

Further research should be conducted to continue understanding the relationship of these variables to life in elementary school classrooms. Considerable research has been conducted on the needed professional skills of a teacher and the most effective ways to help teachers develop them. Much less attention has been paid to helping the teacher learn to relate well to students and attend to the affective and interpersonal aspects of the classroom. Both of these need to receive attention from researchers and practitioners at all levels of teacher education; in preservice and in staff development programs. The difficulties of working in the affective and interpersonal realms will make the task difficult, but it is nonetheless essential that teachers be able to relate well to students as to teach them effectively.

The effective teacher in this sample, then is a person who is friendly, enthusiastic, caring, supportive and who possesses some essential professional skills. Both the personal and professional characteristics define the effective teacher. This type of teacher probably has a profound effect

upon the experiential curriculum of elementary school students. And that, ultimately is what schools must be concerned with.

References

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4. For a discussion of other approaches to teaching, see Joyce, Bruce and Marsha Weil. Models of Teaching. Prentice-Hall: Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1980.